

Private Fostering in Somerset



What is considered to be private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16, or 18 if disabled, is living with someone other than their parent or other person with parental responsibility or a close relative for 28 days or more. A close relative would be a brother or sister, uncle, aunt, grandparent or step-parent.

- An occasional weekend spent by the child at home with their parents would not constitute a break in the arrangements
- Private fostering is not arranged or paid for by a local authority. Children cared for under these arrangements are not classed as looked after by a local authority
- It is an arrangement made by the parents of a child and requires parental consent. If parents do not agree to it, the arrangement is not private fostering, although the local authority has a duty to assess the situation
- Some teenagers choose to live with another family. This is a private fostering arrangement by agreement between the young person, the parents and the carer
- Some young people at independent and language schools stay with host families. If the period exceeds 28 days then it counts as a private fostering arrangement and follows the same regulations.

Private Fostering – Information for Professionals



PDF File

Private Fostering case?

Invisible Children

Poor regulation of private fostering is leaving hundreds of children vulnerable to abuse.

Councils suspect there are 500 cases of abuse of privately fostered children but Children and Families Across Borders says this is an under-estimate.

Ministers say they want to improve regulation in the area.

The findings come 10 years after the murder of eight-year-old Victoria Climbié who was brought to England from the Ivory Coast.

Victoria died in 2000 after being tortured for months by her great-aunt and her partner in north London.

Research shows there are at least 10,000 children in Britain growing up in informal fostering arrangements unknown to local authorities.

Victoria Climbié



Performance Reports

– Private Fostering Cases known to Somerset County Council

Yearly – Last 12 months

Private Fostering Cases Starting by Area

Rolling 12 Months

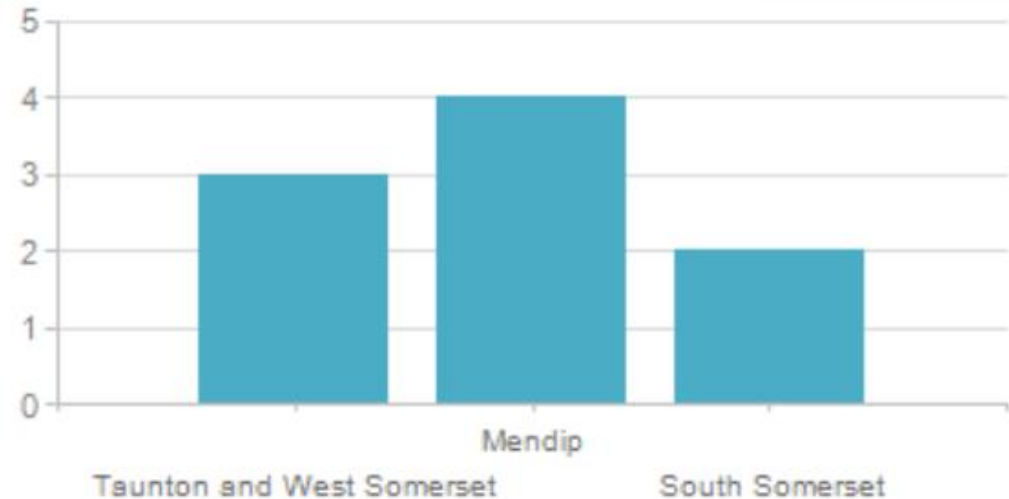


Total Cases Starting for County is 17

Quarterly – Last 3 monthly

Open Private Fostering Cases by Area

As at 01/03/2019



Total Open Cases for County is 9



Private Fostering Report

June 2017

The most recent inspection by Ofsted into the arrangements for safeguarding children in Somerset was undertaken in January 2015 and noted the following:

“Private Fostering arrangements are not being identified and action to raise awareness of the need to notify Children’s services of such arrangements is underdeveloped.”

The last annual report was presented to the LSCB in Somerset in 2016.

One of the duties of the local authority is to promote public awareness of Private Fostering and the responsibility of the notification requirements that both the public and other professionals have when they become aware of a possible private fostering arrangement.

Local authorities have a responsibility to promote awareness of private fostering with partner agencies including health colleagues i.e. health visitors, GP surgeries etc



National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering

Every Child Matters



Adobe Acrobat
Document

The 2005 regulations are made under the Children Act 1989. The National Minimum Standards are issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, which requires local authorities in their social services functions to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. As such the National Minimum Standards do not have the full force of statute, but should be complied with unless local circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which justify a variation.

Replacement Children Act 1989 Guidance on Private Fostering

Every Child Matters



Adobe Acrobat
Document

The measures in section 44 of the Children Act 2004 and the Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005 are intended to strengthen and enhance the Children Act 1989 private fostering notification scheme. Along with the National Minimum Standards, they are intended to focus local authorities' attention on private fostering by requiring them to take a more proactive approach to identifying arrangements in their area. The new measures are expected to improve notification rates and compliance with the existing legislative framework for private fostering – and, therefore, to address the key problems identified with the scheme: low notification rates, late notification and a perceived lack of consistent local authority commitment to meeting the needs of privately fostered children.

Guidance

Tri X

3.2 Private Fostering



SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This procedure applies to children who are cared for by people other than their parent or close relative for more than 27 days and who are NOT subject to any order or arrangement that would place them in the care of the local authority.

AMENDMENT

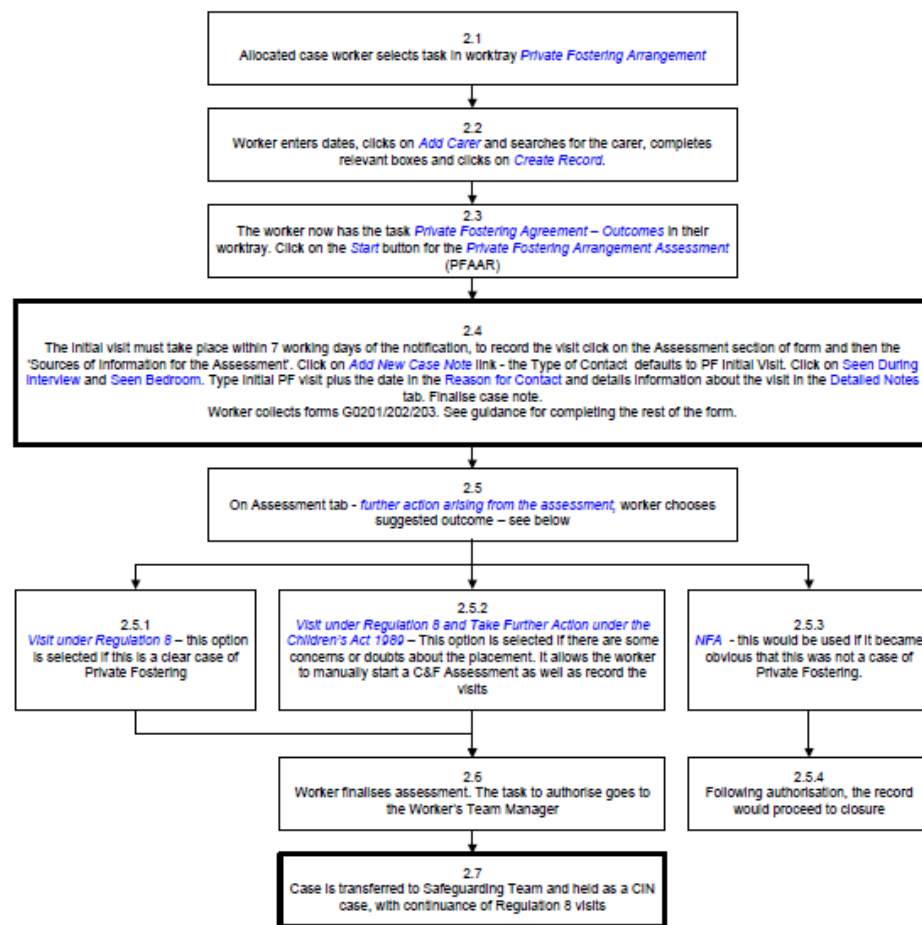
This chapter was amended in November 2017 to add clarity to the definition of private fostering with regards to the legislation and children under 16 who spend more than 2 weeks in residence during holiday time in a school.

Contents

1. Definition
2. Notifications to the Local Authority
3. Action to be Taken on Receipt of Notification
4. Initial Visit to Private Foster Carers
5. Assessment of Private Foster Carers
6. Financial Support for Private Foster Carers
7. Imposing Requirements on Private Foster Carers
8. Limit on Number of Children
9. Prohibition and Disqualification
10. Non-compliance with Requirements
11. Visits to the Foster Home - Frequency, Purpose and Records
12. Review of Private Foster Carers
13. Local Authority Foster Carers who Privately Foster
14. After the Private Fostering Arrangement Ends

BPM

Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record



Tool Kit – LCS Guidance

ontuitive

Family Working | Contact & Referral | CIN process (child in need) | CP process (child protection) | CLA process (child looked after) | **Fostering & Adoption** | Specialist Teams | Demographics | Ad Pro

Fostering & Adoption

- Fostering & Adoption guidance
- Placement code definitions
- **Private Fostering**
 - Private Fostering starting from Contact & Referral**
 - Private Fostering - Manual Start
 - Private Fostering Arrangement Assessment Record
 - Private Fostering Visits under Regulation 8
 - Private Fostering - Child moving to a new Private Fosterer
 - Private Fostering - Ending Arrangement
 - Private Fostering Practice Guidance
 - Private fostering BPMs
 - Private fostering templates

Private Fostering starting from Contact & Referral

Print topic

Starting Private Fostering from Contact & Referral

① The Outcome *Private Fostering Agreement* is available on the Contact form but can only be selected if you also select the *Link to Existing Referral* outcome - in this case, the *Progress to Referral* outcome will not be available and the *Link to Existing Referral* outcome will be required.

Further Action

① You have selected to start the Private Fostering Agreement outcome, but this outcome requires that you also choose the Link to Existing Referral outcome.

Suggested Outcomes

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Progress to Referral	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule 2 Counselling
<input type="checkbox"/> Link to Existing Referral	<input type="checkbox"/> Missing Child
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Agency Adoption—Ensure there is an Allocated Case Worker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Fostering Agreement
<input type="checkbox"/> Enquiry of CP	<input type="checkbox"/> Young Carers
<input type="checkbox"/> Provision of Information/Advice	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to Records
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Other Agency	<input type="checkbox"/> SUST Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> No Further Action	<input type="checkbox"/> CP Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> C & F Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> OLA Requesting service from Somerset
<input type="checkbox"/> Section 2 Report	<input type="checkbox"/> OLA CP notification
<input type="checkbox"/> Section 22 Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Action (please specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediary Service	

① In the referral select MR as the Category of Need

Private Fostering Assessment



The legal position – Regulation 8

In ensuring that the arrangement is in the child's best interests, Children's Social Care must follow the private fostering regulations in Part IX and Schedule 7&8 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by S44 of the Children Act 2004.

The social worker undertaking the assessment must arrange for checks on the private foster carer, all members of the household and frequent visitors over 16 to be made with the Disclosure and Barring Service and Children's Services records (including for the areas of any previous addresses). The social worker should also seek written references and arrange to visit the personal referees.

The assessment will consider the following:

- The suitability of the private foster carer and all members of the household
- The suitability of the accommodation.

Visiting Frequency Regulation 8

Visits by a social worker must be made to the child and the private foster carer at the foster home **within one week of the placement**, or the date when notification was received if later, and then visits will be made every six weeks in the first year by a social worker.

In subsequent years, visits must be at least **three monthly**.

The need to visit more frequently will be decided by the social worker and his or her manager depending on the circumstances and the need to visit unannounced and/or to choose times when all members of the household are likely to be present should also be considered.



Useful links ▶

TRI X

https://www.proceduresonline.com/somerset/cs/chapters/p_private_fost.html


BPM

http://enterprise/Learning_Guide/CSCToolkit/Content/BPMs/Private%20fostering%20BPM.pdf

Toolkit

[http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/Learning_Guide/CSCToolkit/LearningGuide%20\(LCS\)/html/topic_8378_CD2D-58D6-4895-BCDC-E2ACEF0FC99E_896FF031-BA88-4D11-B3F1-47236781CE61_1.htm](http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/Learning_Guide/CSCToolkit/LearningGuide%20(LCS)/html/topic_8378_CD2D-58D6-4895-BCDC-E2ACEF0FC99E_896FF031-BA88-4D11-B3F1-47236781CE61_1.htm)

[http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/Learning_Guide/CSCToolkit/LearningGuide%20\(LCS\)/html/topic_8378_CD2D-58D6-4895-BCDC-E2ACEF0FC99E_BF50E7D9-6B34-4655-8B58-3B55C5C80264_3.htm](http://enterprise.somerset.gov.uk/Learning_Guide/CSCToolkit/LearningGuide%20(LCS)/html/topic_8378_CD2D-58D6-4895-BCDC-E2ACEF0FC99E_BF50E7D9-6B34-4655-8B58-3B55C5C80264_3.htm)

Somerset County Council 

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/childrens-services/adoption-and-fostering/private-fostering/>



To inform Somerset Children's Services about private fostering arrangements please contact:



Contact: Children and Young People's Team

Address: Customer Contact, PO Box 618, Taunton, TA1
3WF

Email: childrens@somerset.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 123 2224 (please select option 1)

Fax: 01823 321187

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, Saturday
and Sunday closed.